

July 16, 1999

Jane Henney, FDA Commissioner;

Donna Shalala, Secretary of Department of Health
and Human Services;

For your review attached are two articles:

- Slaughterhouse Shockwaves (States animal slaughtered while conscious)
- HFA Files legal Petitions to Combat Mad Cow Disease in the United States (describes animal diseases transmitted to humans)

Please use your influence and also share these articles with those that can also influence a change with these wrongs.

Your help is more than appreciated. Thank you.

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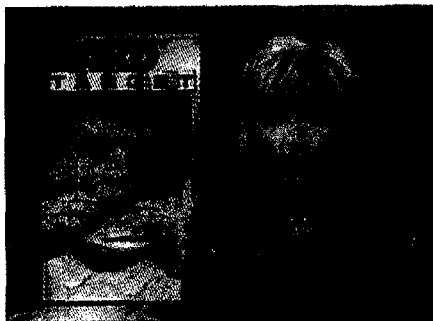
cc: President Clinton

Note: articles are from The Humane Farming association
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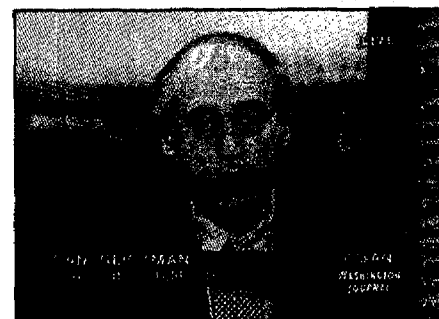
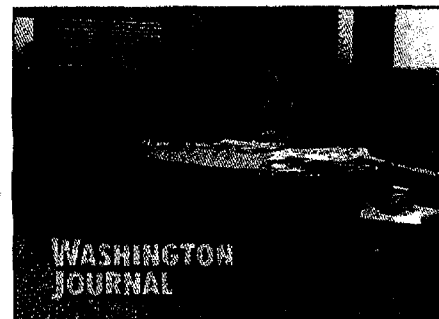
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Slaughterhouse Shockwaves



HFA's groundbreaking investigative exposé, *Slaughterhouse*, by Chief Investigator Gail Eisnitz, is awakening millions. Above, the explosive work is the feature story on national television.

USDA Secretary Dan Glickman on the hot seat — here being questioned about HFA's *Slaughterhouse*. Glickman concedes that enforcement of the Humane Slaughter Act is almost nonexistent.



HFA's landmark book *Slaughterhouse* is awakening a new generation of Americans to the abuses perpetuated by the U.S. meat-packing industry.

Slaughterhouse has quickly become the authoritative reference for anyone interested in the treatment of farm animals. The news media are broadcasting HFA's findings, members of Congress have called for federal reforms — even President Clinton's cabinet member, USDA Secretary Dan Glickman, has stated the book is being carefully read by government officials and meat inspectors.

HFA is currently working hard not only to educate people — but also to halt the abuses we have so carefully documented. ■

Congressman: Animals Slaughtered While Conscious

Associated Press

Washington Livestock are routinely skinned, dismembered or scalded while still conscious despite a law that requires animals to be knocked out before they are slaughtered, says a Congressman who helped strengthen the law 20 years ago.

In a recent letter to the Agriculture Department, Representative George Brown, D-San Bernardino, alleged that packing plant workers "often find themselves resorting to unbelievable brutality" to keep production lines moving, some as fast as 1,100 animals per hour.

Brown, a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee, urged Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman to "take whatever actions are necessary" to ensure that the law is enforced.

His statement was based on allegations of USDA inspectors and a recent book, "Slaughterhouse," that is based on interviews over the past decade with workers at several plants.

The book quotes plant workers describing live hogs being dumped in scalding tubs and cattle being skinned or dismembered while still conscious. The workers say stun guns frequently fail to knock out the animals.

USDA officials, who are responsible for enforcing the law, deny widespread mistreatment of animals.

Representatives of the meat-packing industry say there is no incentive for them to slaughter conscious animals because the stress damages meat quality.

"We try to treat the hogs as gentle as we can prior to stunning because we get better quality meat," said Joseph Luter III, chief executive officer of Virginia-based Smithfield Foods, one of the nation's biggest packers. Smithfield slaughters 80,000 hogs a day at five plants.

The book's author, Gail Eisnitz of the Humane Farming Association, interviewed several workers at the Sioux Falls, S.D. plant before its takeover by Smithfield. One worker, an official in the local union, told her: "I've seen live animals shackled, hoisted, stuck, and skinned. Too many to count."

At a Smithfield plant in Bladen County, N.C., live hogs have been dumped in the scalding tub used to remove hair, Eisnitz wrote. The hogs are supposed to bleed to death before reaching the tub. Two current or former USDA employees say they have seen practices similar to those alleged in the book.

Steve Cockerham, an inspector in Nebraska, said USDA does not know whether animals are being slaughtered properly because inspectors are not stationed in that part of the plant.

Lester Friedlander, a former USDA veterinarian, said he has seen cattle bellowing and moving after they were supposed to be stunned, as well as live cows that were "treated so roughly as they were moved into the plant that their skin was ripped off." "I can't believe we're here in 1999, and there's still abuse," he said.

HFA Files Legal Petitions to Combat *MAD COW* Disease in the United States

You may have seen in the nation's newspapers several weeks ago a chilling report that hinted at the magnitude of what may be the world's next great epidemic.

A panel of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) scientists have asked our government to prohibit blood donations from people who have lived in England in the last twenty years. Their concern is that these people may have eaten meat infected with mad cow disease and could be at risk for getting and spreading the disease here in the U.S.

Don't expect the FDA, however, to voluntarily adopt this recommendation from its own scientific advisors. For the FDA is already ignoring even more compelling scientific warnings about mad cow disease, in particular, the dangers of feeding dead animals to farm animals.

It is because of this inaction that HFA has filed two formal legal petitions demanding that the federal government act immediately to monitor and prevent mad cow type diseases in the U.S. Joining with HFA in this effort are the Center for Food Safety, the Center for Media & Democracy, and several families of CJD victims.

The Silent Killer

Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) are killing people, deer, elk, and sheep in the U.S. TSEs are a mysterious class of diseases that are called by different names in different species.

Some identified types of TSEs are Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) and new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (nvCJD) which is a human disease apparently caused by the same agent which causes bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or mad cow disease.

HFA's demand for immediate government action is given added urgency by the case of a thirty-year old Utah man who is now terminally ill with CJD, a mad cow type disease in humans.

Douglas McEwen may have contracted CJD by eating or handling deer or elk infected with mad deer disease. Additionally, there is concern that, as a frequent blood donor, he may have inadvertently passed on contaminated blood to others.

Commenting to the news media on the petitions, HFA's National Director Bradley Miller stated, "TSEs represent a potentially devastating threat to both human and animal health. Given what we know now, it is unconscionable that our government is still allowing the feeding of blood and other animal by-products to farm animals."

The common characteristic of TSE diseases is that they are invariably fatal. They can be transmitted to humans through exposure to contaminated human growth hormone, corneal transplants, the use of dura mater in transplants, the use of infected probes, and possibly through blood.

A major route of transmission occurs through ingestion of the infectious agent, such as eating infected meat. The agent does not trigger an immune response. The doomed animal or human appears to be in perfectly normal health for a significant portion of their lifetime.

Later, the disease emerges as holes and amyloid plaque material spreading in the brain, causing symptoms of dementia (which routinely appears to be Alzheimer's Disease), physical failure, and death.

Before a human or animal exhibits symptoms there is no way to test for the disease even though the human or animal is infected and contagious.

Prior to the appearance of nvCJD, the best known occurrence of a TSE in humans was the disease kuru, a TSE that appeared in the Fore tribe in New Guinea in the early 20th century. This disease was spread by cannibalistic rituals, including not only the consumption of brain but exposure of brain matter to mucous membranes and cuts in the skin.

Just as cannibalistic rituals produced the TSE kuru in humans, forcing farm animals to become "cannibals"

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Mad Cow Disease (Continued from page 5)

creates the same problems.

British mad cow disease (BSE) appeared in the mid-1980s. It quickly spread from just a few animals to infect hundreds of thousands.

By 1988, this disease was linked to feeding rendered animal by-products to livestock. British cattle were consuming the remains of sheep, cattle, and other animals deemed unfit for human consumption.

Despite the British outbreak, the dangerous practice of feeding rendered meat and bonemeal to livestock has been widely practiced in the U.S., where no meaningful restrictions were even attempted until August 1997.

Today, the U.S. still allows practices that should be banned, such as feeding pigs to pigs, pigs to cattle, and

CJD also exists in the U.S., but it is unclear at what level. Most CJD here is considered "sporadic" with an unknown cause. However, the U.S. has a large population of persons with various dementia diseases, the most often diagnosed being Alzheimer's (four million cases). And studies of people in the U.S. who have died of dementia suggest much higher levels of CJD than commonly suspected.

Unlike virtually all other diseases, including AIDS, where the infectious agent can be detected in the early stages of the incubation process, doctors are unable to determine if a person is infected with TSE until right before symptoms occur.

Currently, federal agencies do not even require state health officials to report TSE cases. ■

SUMMARY OF HFA's PETITION TO THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA)

In its first petition, HFA demands that:

- Blood and blood products from all mammals, including pigs and cows, must be prohibited for use in animal feed and pet foods.
- Gelatin and gelatin by-products must not be used in animal feed, as gelatin might carry infectious agents.
- Porcine materials must not be used in animal feed because U.S. pigs are known to have exhibited symptoms of central nervous system disease suspected as being TSE and have proven susceptible to TSE in laboratory tests.
- TSE-positive material absolutely must not be fed to any animals or be used in cosmetics, fertilizer or other products.

cattle blood products to calves. These practices are allowed despite suggestive evidence that TSE disease may already infect pigs, cattle, and squirrels and despite the existence of proven TSEs in sheep, deer, elk, and mink.

To date, 33 human beings have died from new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (nvCJD), apparently contracted from cattle infected with BSE. How many more will die is uncertain.

Due to the long incubation period, it will be many years before the extent of the disease and deaths are determined. Estimates now range from dozens to hundreds of thousands of eventual deaths from nvCJD in Britain.


SUMMARY OF HFA's PETITION TO THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC)

HFA's second petition demands that the CDC:

- Initiate a significant epidemiological investigation to determine the incidence of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies among the human population of the U.S.
- Develop an ongoing national monitoring and registry program utilizing autopsy examinations to determine any changes in the incidence of CJD-like diseases among the human population of the U.S.
- Direct all state medical officers to engage in a reporting process, similar to the reporting requirements of other infectious and transmissible diseases, to the CDC for the purpose of establishing a national cumulative database and reporting system.

ACTION REQUESTED:

From the information provided, the HFA has concluded that the CDC should initiate a significant epidemiological investigation to determine the incidence of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies among the human population of the U.S. The CDC should also develop an ongoing national monitoring and registry program utilizing autopsy examinations to determine any changes in the incidence of CJD-like diseases among the human population of the U.S. Finally, the CDC should direct all state medical officers to engage in a reporting process, similar to the reporting requirements of other infectious and transmissible diseases, to the CDC for the purpose of establishing a national cumulative database and reporting system.

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